

**WATER SUPPLY OPERATOR CERTIFICATION
ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

**Tuesday March 22, 2016, 12:00 P.M.
Capital 3 Room, 3rd Floor
Crowne Plaza Hotel, Springfield, IL**

The meeting was called to order at 12:24 pm, following lunch being served.

Advisory board members present were:

Wayne Nelson, Curran-Gardner Water District
Dennis Ross, Otter Lake Water Commission
Burr Koepsel, Carollo Engineers
Chris Johnson, Wade – Trim Operations Services
Cindy Munger, Aqua Illinois

Also in attendance were the following:

Mark Britton, IEPA/Division of Public Water Supplies
Tatum DeMay, IEPA/Division of Public Water Supplies
Dave McMillan, IEPA/Division of Public Water Supplies
Joanne Olsen, IEPA/Division of Legal Counsel
Andrea Rhodes, IEPA/Division of Public Water Supplies
Paul Shetley, Environmental Resource Training Center
Kevin Hinderliter, Village of Ashland

Wayne N. thanked Laurie D. (Illinois Section AWWA) for making all the arrangements for the meeting and lunch. Everyone present was asked to introduce themselves and identify their affiliation.

Motion was made by Cindy M. to accept the minutes from the September 17, 2015 meeting; seconded by Dennis R. Motion passed.

Discussion was opened for old business. Wayne N. asked for any updates concerning the proposed changes to water supply operator certification, specifically, in the Title 35: Environmental Protection; Subtitle F: Public Water Supplies; Chapter II: Environmental Protection Agency; Part 681 rule. Joanne O. and Dave McM. related the progress toward approval for various changes with an expected completion/implementation schedule. Most issues were now under internal review and it was expected to be approved.

It was explained that some supplies, due to their process including reverse osmosis, would be changed from a Class B operation to a Class A operation. If the operators currently there were not holders of an A license, knowing that the operators had been operating the same

equipment before the classification change took place, IEPA expects that there will be a grace period of about a year for the operators to upgrade to the Class A level without any penalty.

It was also clarified that any supply with aeration and filtration in their process will be classified as a Class B, but if they are using membrane filtration they would be classified as Class A.

A significant amount of discussion was then entertained concerning what exactly constitutes “experience” under the licensing requirements. Joanne related that the new criteria will give specific amounts of credit for both college and non-college coursework with a formula to determine how many hours are needed to satisfy the months of experience in the statute. In many cases the actual months spent working hands-on will count for more months of experience because the worker can submit a log of hours worked. For example, 100 clock hours of actual time spent in hands on water plant activities will result in 3 months experience toward the licensing requirement. That amount of experience could be worked in less than 3 weeks if the worker is working a 40 hour work week. The intent of the experience criteria is to ensure the worker has practical working knowledge and is familiar with any equipment associated with the license they are granted. It is more important to log specific equipment training hours than to simply prove they were employed for a certain number of months.

The advisory board was concerned about how a supervisor could obtain hands-on experience credit toward a license, needed to sign off on permits and reports. Union shops often forbid a supervisor to conduct any tasks that are needed for experience but the workers with licenses are not willing to take on the responsibility of signing off. Administrative tasks are currently specifically excluded from counting as experience. IEPA asked the board to suggest possible solutions for consideration.

Joanne O. reported that the rules for reciprocity granted to military trained/certified persons were going to JCAR for final approval. IEPA will report the progress of that action when completed.

The sanctioning case against an operator has resolved due to the operator’s retirement.

Andrea R. reported the operator application form will be updated to reflect the changes to experience hours when approved. The exam form did not require any modifications. Andrea R. also indicated there has been no change approved concerning waste water continuing education training being required or what type of training/categories will be acceptable for CEU credit toward water operator license renewals.

Dave McM. indicated the 601, 602 and 603 parts are expected to be promulgated soon. Part 604 is being worked on currently and its goal is to simplify the 10-state standards. Legionella and lead issues were explained in response to the Quincy, Illinois and Flint, Michigan problems.

Paul S. (ERTC) explained that money has stopped from the USEPA. In addition, the US Dept. of Education reclassified ERTC as a “program”, not a college, so students are no longer eligible for

financial aid. This affects about 2/3 of the students. ERTC staff has asked to have funding continue for 2 years until they can find alternative replacement funds or until the program becomes accredited.

Kevin H. thanked the board for the opportunity to observe the meeting/discussions and felt it was good information and experience to see how the group functioned.

Next meeting will be at the Illinois Potable Water Conference but a specific date and time was not set until it was determined when the operator exam would be offered to avoid a conflict.

A motion to adjourn was made by Burr and seconded by Chris. The motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 1:47 p.m.